



# Fast Food OR Food Fast?

**Q**uick doesn't always mean eating out. Fast food doesn't always equal cheaper either when you consider the price you might have to pay later with the dentist or the doctor for all the fat and sugar many fast food restaurant meals contain.

Compare the cost and nutritional content of the following 'Fast Food' meal vs a similar home 'Food Fast' meal option:

"Fast Food" Option	Kcal	Fat	Protein	Cost	"Food Fast at Home" Option	Kcal	Fat	Protein	Cost	Comments
Whopper w/ cheese (3 oz beef)	800	49	35		Cheese burger (3oz cooked)	480	24	37		Fast food 1/4lb burgers and larger are almost always served w/ mayo which adds a lot of fat (& kcal). Low fat cheddar cheese melts fine, but isn't available at fast food joints. Its hard to choose milk at a fast food restaurant when the fries are "calling your name" ;)
Med Fries	360	18	-		Baked Beans	130	1	6		
Med Coke	200	-	4		1% Milk	100	2	8		
Total	1360	67	39	\$4.49	Total	710	27	51	\$1.30	



## Compare the COST vs NUTRITIONAL CONTENT

The recent commissary price for a bag of Lay's potato chips broke down to 13 cents/1 oz serving while Red Delicious ap-

ples were 25 cents per serving. However, most folks would probably eat more than 1 oz of chips and get extra fat calories and sodium they do not need.

Those who chose the apples added fiber and energy packed carbs to their diet without added fat and salt.



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## What do you do when it's TIME TO EAT?

- ☐ Stop at a restaurant on your way to wherever you need to be next.
- ☐ Pick up food at the grocery store or deli on your way home.
- ☐ Pull an 'emergency' meal from your freezer and reheat it.
- ☐ Serve a meal from your slow cooker.
- ☐ Whip up something from your well-stocked pantry.
- ☐ Any of the above, depending on how much planning you've done.

Every choice has a cost in hours and minutes and in dollars and cents. Every choice impacts your health. Planning ahead increases your choices. Choices that still may include selections from fast food places, grocery stores or foods you can fix fast at home. Choices that trim time spent shopping for your pantry and still do not bust the budget. Even a 'special' meal doesn't have to mean hours of prep and cooking time.

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**Dietitians and Diet Technicians at Darnall** offer these suggestions that they use when pressed for time and need to fix something **QUICK!**

- 1. Turkey or veggie subs from SUBWAY** or fix your own with small sub rolls and deli meats. Just be sure to add lots of fresh vegetables and go easy on the mayo or creamy dressings.
- 2. Try Lean Cuisine's Margherita Pizza** with only 320 calories and 9 grams of fat. Read on and you will find a quick and easy pizza recipe you can make at home.

**3. Try a one dish meal idea for easy cleanup** -brown lean ground beef, drain, add canned tomatoes and corn, simmer till vegetables are warm and serve with salad, fruit and bread. Easy! More quick and easy recipes ahead!

**4. Grill extra meat on weekends** or slow days and chop and save for using in stirfry recipes with fresh or frozen vegetables. Need rice but don't have a rice cooker? Did you know you can even cook rice ahead of time or in the microwave...we'll tell you how. Just add salad, bagged from the store or make your own, fruits and there's a great healthful meal.

**5. Simple sandwiches** can be great time-savers and still be the backbone of a healthful meal. Try tuna from the new foil packs, no draining needed, and add your favorites: onion, peppers, or apples and lite mayo. Use whole wheat bread (with 2-3 gms fiber or more per slice). Add veggies on the sandwich. Serve with tomato soup diluted w/ milk or milk to drink and you've had a choice from every group in the USDA's Food Guide Pyramid! Check out the new Food Guide Pyramid at [MyPyramid.gov](http://MyPyramid.gov).

**6. Keep flour tortillas on hand** and fill with browned lean ground meat, shredded left-over chicken or cheese, and top off with leafy lettuce, tomato and your favorite salsas.

**7. Double the recipe and freeze half** for a meal later in the week. Check out our turkey spaghetti recipe that freezes well and only gets better when reheated.



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## The **KEY** Steps to FOOD FAST!

Healthy foods can be a part of any schedule and cooking style. Planning is the key to creating menu options that fit your life-style. When you're ready, here's some basic steps that will help you be prepared to have quick healthy meals at home.

➡ **Take 5** - Take 5 minutes to plan just 5 evening meals for the week. Chances are you'll have leftovers for the remaining 2. Now you have a plan to that can save shopping time and decrease buying last minute meals out that can drain your finances.

➡ **Stock up** on the basics—Smart shopping puts the ingredients you need where you need them—in the cupboard, refrigerator or freezer:

### In the cupboard:

- ✓ Spaghetti, macaroni, other pasta
- ✓ Flake crumbs or cornbread stuffing mix
- ✓ Ready to heat sauces & soups—low sodium if needed
- ✓ Bouillon or broth granules, low sodium
- ✓ Rice, lentils—try orzo for a change
- ✓ Potatoes, onions
- ✓ Canned fruits, vegetables, beans, tuna
- ✓ Canned, bottled fruit, and juices
- ✓ Salsa, seasoning and sauce mixes
- ✓ Cooking oil—olive, canola or peanut
- ✓ Non-stick cooking sprays

### In the refrigerator or freezer:

- ✓ Fresh and/or frozen vegetables, baby carrots, pretorn salad
- ✓ Greens
- ✓ Fresh and/or frozen fruits and fruit juices
- ✓ Frozen chopped onion and green pepper—or can buy fresh now in produce section
- ✓ Tortillas, pita bread, pizza crust, whole grain breads, ready-to-bake rolls
- ✓ Cheese, (sliced, shredded), yogurt, milk, eggs, margarine
- ✓ Lean ground meats, sliced meats or poultry (pre-cooked if desired), fish
- ✓ Skinless, boneless chicken or turkey breasts
- ✓ Cooked pastas (like lasagna noodles) if desired.

➡ **Plan "Pyramid" Menus** The easiest way to serve a healthy meal is to use the proportions suggested by the Food Guide Pyramid.

### For a dinner:

- ✓ Choose a lean meat or protein source
- ✓ Choose 2 grain servings—make at least 1 whole grain
- ✓ Choose 2 or more fruit or vegetable servings, --more is better
- ✓ Add a dairy source

If desired, add small amounts of fats, oils or sweeteners (such as margarine, salad dressings, sugar) to enhance flavor.

Check out [MyPyramid.gov](http://MyPyramid.gov) to plan meals to meet your and your family's needs.

➡ **Eat & Enjoy!**



**MyPyramid.gov**  
STEPS TO A HEALTHIER YOU



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## Delicious Do-Aheads

There are many websites (just Google “quick meals” or “minute meals” and see!) and cookbooks with great recipes for quick and healthy meals. Betty Crocker’s Quick and Easy cookbook gives these great do-ahead ideas to make quick meal preparation easier:

### **Cook ground beef**

Cook and drain ground beef. Freeze in freezer bags or containers in 2-cup amounts (which equals about 1 pound cooked). Then just pop out and use for chili, meat sauce or tacos.

### **Make burgers or meatballs**

Mix extra ground beef and seasonings; shape into patties or balls. Freeze individually in plastic wrap, so you can cook just what you need.

### **Cook extra chicken**

Cook more than you need and cut up. Freeze in 1-cup amounts in small freezer bags up to 4 months. Use in casseroles and pot pies.

### **Cut up fruit**

Freeze in resealable plastic freezer bags. Use directly from freezer for smoothies or fruit sauces.

### **Grate ginger and mince garlic**

Use for seasoning stir-fries and other dishes. When you’re really pressed for time, purchase bottled grated ginger and minced garlic.

### **Shred cheese**

Use for pizza, pasta and casseroles. When you’re pressed for time, purchase already-shredded or grated cheese.

### **Cook extra pasta, couscous and rice**

After draining hot pasta or rice, toss extras with oil to keep it from sticking together. Refrigerate in resealable plastic bags for up to 5 days or freeze in freezer containers up to 6 months. To reheat, microwave covered on High for 1 to 3 minutes or until heated through; or simply place in colander and pour boiling water over it until heated through. Drain and serve immediately.

### **Cut-up uncooked meat**

Cut chicken or turkey breasts, steaks or pork tenderloin into strips or cubes. Freeze in resealable freezer bags or containers with lids for up to 9 months. Thaw in refrigerator before cooking in stir-fries or skillet meals.

### **Wash salad**

Rinse dirty lettuce leaves such as romaine and iceberg and blot dry with paper towels. Store in perforated plastic bags or regular plastic bags. Pressed for time, buy bagged salad.

### **Dice vegetables**

Chop or slice more fresh vegetables, such as onions, bell peppers, celery and carrots, than you need for one meal. Freeze in resealable plastic freezer bags or containers with lids. No need to thaw them before using in stir-fries or skillet meals.